



SPORTS

Mounties win three at Spokane Valley tourney

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Good day to our valued subscriber Gilbert Weatherspoon of Elgin

Walden out-raises McLeod-Skinner 10:1

McLeod-Skinner has raised more than any of Walden's past Democratic challengers

By Max Denning
The Observer

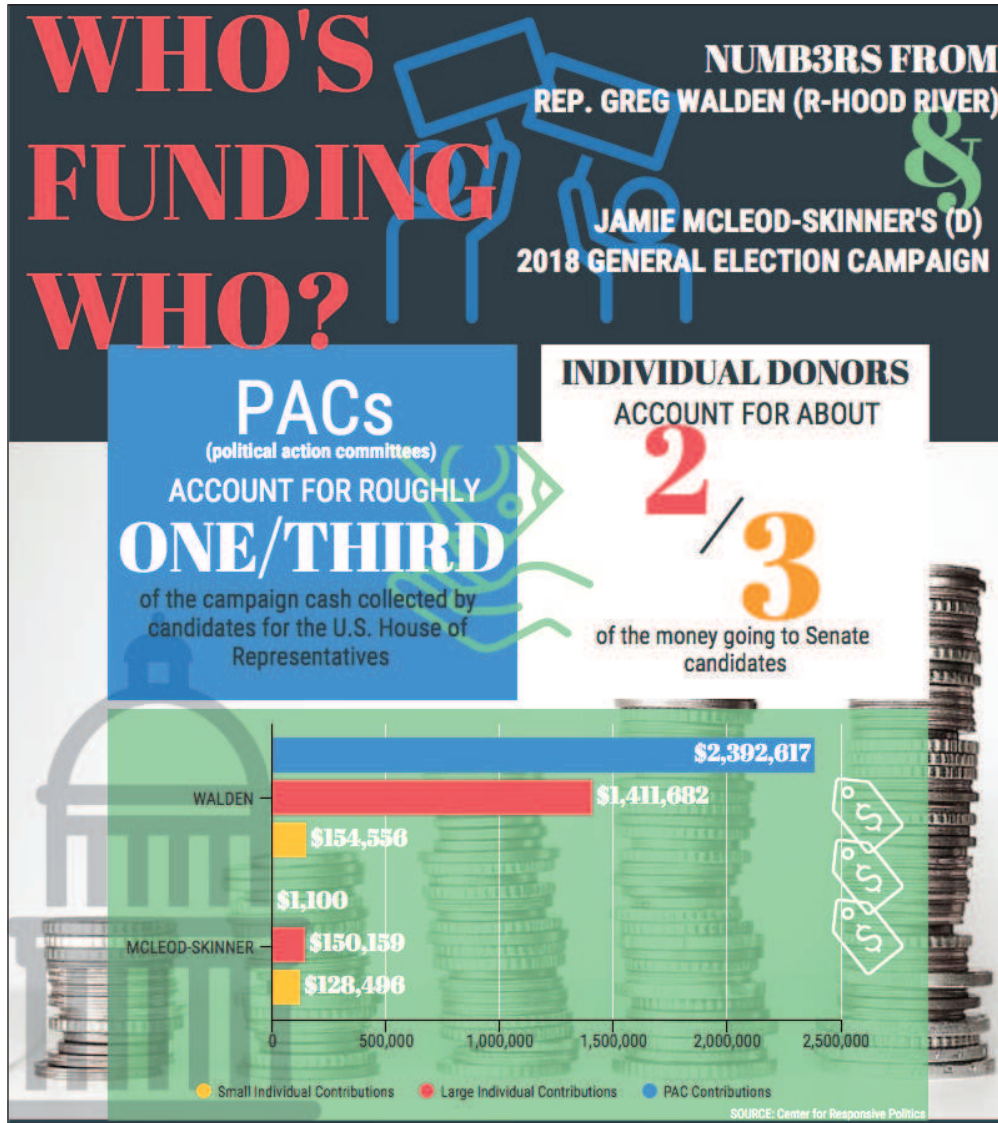
If money decided elections, Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) would have a clear-cut victory in November.

As of June 30, the most recent Federal Elections Commission filing deadline, Walden had raised almost \$4.2 million, while his Second Congressional District challenger, Democrat Jamie McLeod-Skinner, raised \$281,000. She said as of mid-August she has raised more than \$400,000, which is the most a Democrat has ever reported raising while challenging Walden, who was first elected in 1998, according to data from the Center for Responsive Politics. Still, the funds fail to approach the sum Walden has amassed.

On a list of important items to know about money in politics, opensecrets.org, the website of The Center for Responsive Politics, listed "Money Isn't Everything." However, they did stress its importance. "Money isn't the most important thing to politicians. Getting elected is. Money is so important because it's an essential ingredient in winning campaigns, but it's not the only one."

Walden and his challenger's money, however, comes from very different places. According to The Center for Responsive Politics, small individual contributions — less than \$200 — make up less than 4 percent of Walden's money. Large individual contributions — greater than \$200 — make up 33.7 percent, and donations from political action committees constitute 57.11 percent. PACs are political committees organized for the purpose of raising and spending money to elect and defeat candidates. According to www.opensecrets.org, most PACs

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Audrey Love/Infograph

Hitting the trails for a good cause

MERA Drug-Free Run fundraises to support youth substance abuse and prevention

By Audrey Love
The Observer

Smoky weather conditions plaguing the Grande Ronde Valley will hopefully dissipate in time for area residents to hit the trails Saturday in support of keeping Union County's youth drug, tobacco and alcohol-free.

Mt. Emily Recreation Area will host the 21st annual MERA Drug-Free Run, a major fundraiser organized by the Union County Safe Communities Coalition in support of youth substance abuse and prevention activities it sponsors throughout the county. Participants will gather at the Owsley Canyon Trailhead Saturday morning and lace up their running shoes for either a 5K, 10K or one-mile "fun run," followed by a small awards ceremony.

In two decades, the run has undergone quite a few changes, according to UCSCC's coordinator, Robin Wortman.

"Years ago the community had the Drug Free Relay, which was a 24-hour event that involved teams making continuous movement around a track," she said of the run's origins. "Over the years, the number of hours the relay (was held) decreased (and) three years ago there was construction at Central and the La Grande High School, so we were unable to use our usual venue."

With no venue and the event's deadline looming, the coalition had to improvise — and looked to the Blue Mountains for inspiration.

"The committee looked at a variety of options and decided they would like to hold an event at MERA," she said. "After some research and a lot of discussion, it was decided that we would try the event with an un-timed mile and a 5K and 10K timed trail run."

The location stuck, and UCSCC has held the event at MERA since 2016.

"Participants seemed to like it, and the venue couldn't be more beautiful," Wortman said.

UCSCC designates a committee to organize the event, with coalition members, friends and family volunteering their time to assist with the run. Those who didn't pre-register will still be able to participate with late registration and packet pickup available from 7:30 a.m. until 8:15 a.m. on race day.

The 5K and 10K races are professionally timed and cost \$25 for adults (\$30 to register on race day) and \$10 for youth 12 and younger (\$15 on race day). The one-mile fun run costs \$5 to participate (\$7 on race day). Debit and credit card payments will not be accepted on Saturday.

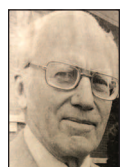
Those who aren't accustomed to wandering MERA's maze of trails, or "wandering" at all, for that matter, need not worry — the run is open to all ages and experience levels, with last year's race drawing a total of 75 participants. Trails are

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La Grande loses a beloved educator

By Dick Mason
The Observer

The numbers are telling. Ken Lilly, a retired educator who died Aug. 15 at age 97, worked for the La Grande



Lilly

School District for 39 years, from 1947 to 1986. Lilly served under eight superintendents during this time and for one year was the principal of three elementary schools.

Still, numbers do not define Lilly. When people discuss Lilly, words like kindness, patience, understanding and intuitive are voiced and numbers are an afterthought.

"He was a beloved figure in the community," said former La Grande School District Superintendent Larry Glaze.

Glaze succeeded Lilly as principal at Willow Elementary School when he retired in 1986. He credits Lilly with not letting paperwork get in the way of looking out for his students.

"He focused more on kids, not bureaucracy," Glaze said.

Lilly once served as the principal of Willow, Riveria and Island City elementary schools at the same time as the district's "area administrator." He did so for only a year, but it was a long one.

"He told me that he never

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Courtesy photo

Scott and Jolene Cook will be traveling to Africa to teach English to students. They will also be taking special shoes to give to the children that can be adjusted to "grow."

La Grande couple hopes to make a difference in Africa

The Shoe That Grows offers children a chance to go to school

By Cherise Kaechele
The Observer

A La Grande couple's life-changing decision will help children in the Congo area go to school.

Scott and Jolene Cook are leaving the country and giving away at least 100 pairs of The Shoe That Grows, which, just like the name implies, is a shoe that can be adjusted to fit a range of five sizes and lasts for five years, according to the company's website. They cost \$15 and were created by a company out of Nampa, Idaho, after the founder saw a need when visiting Kenya.

"They come in different sizes (youth small, youth large and adult). My husband, who is 6 feet, and I (at) 5-foot-3 can wear the same shoes,"

Jolene told The Observer.

They are moving to the Congo area of Africa — one of the poorest areas in the world — to do humanitarian work, Jolene said.

Jolene said schools in Africa often require children to wear shoes, but shoes are expensive and many times a family will have one pair to share. They are hoping to bring the shoes over to allow these children to go to school.

The couple is in the final stages of selling all of their possessions — so they won't be looking in the rearview mirror, Scott said.

Scott, a physical therapist, and Jolene, who has worked as a physical education teacher, will be working at a school together where

they'll be teaching English to the students as well as stepping into the role of PE teacher and providing physical therapy.

"If a family has five children, then each kid may go to school one day a week," she said.

The Cooks are hoping to change that with The Shoe That Grows. The Idaho company that makes the shoes was founded in 2009. Since then, more than 150,000 pairs of the shoes have been given out in more than 90 countries.

The shoes have adjustable clasps that allow them to fit different-sized feet, allowing them to grow along with a child or be shared by family members.

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Call The Observer newsroom at 541-963-3161 or send an email to news@lagrandeobserver.com. More contact info on Page 4A.



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ISLAND CITY HOLDS GREENWAY HEARING

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